GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:28
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2003
VISIT OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ABROAD
M.V.V.S MURTHI;MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Deputy Prime Minister visited USA and European countries recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the issues discussed during the visit and outcome thereof;

(d) the details of the agreements/MoUs signed during the visit;

(e) whether cross-border infiltration, deployment of Indian Troops in Iraq and supply of F-16 Fighter Aircraft to Pakistan by USA were also discussed; and

(f) if so, the details and outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSO PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid down on the table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 28 FOR 22.7.2003 ASKED BY MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT AND DR. M.V.V.S. MURTHI.

1. Dy. Prime Minister visited the United States from 9-14 June 2003, at the invitation of the US Vice President Mr. Richard B. Cheney. Dy. Prime Minister met President George W. Bush, Vice President Cheney, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, Attorney General John Ashcroft and Secretary for Homeland Security Tom Ridge. In addition to the official engagement in Washington D.C., Dy. Prime Minister interacted with foreign policy experts, academicians, media, the business community and the Indian-American community in Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

2. These meetings provided opportunity to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest which cover Prime Minister`s peace initiatives towards Pakistan, cross border terrorism, deployment of Indian troops in Iraq and supply of F-16 Fighter Aircraft to Pakistan by USA. On all these issues India`s stand was made clear. President, USA reiterated his commitment to transforming India - US relations. He also expressed appreciation for Indian Prime Minster`s peace initiative and India`s concern regarding cross border terrorism. In response to US request for deployment of Indian troops in Iraq, Dy. Prime Minister conveyed that the Government was examining the proposal taking all relevant factors into account.

3. Dy. Prime Minister visited the United Kingdom from 15-18 June 2003. During his visit he met UK PM Tony Blair, DPM John Prescott, Home Secretary David Blunkett and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw besides having interaction with Members of UK Parliament belonging to different political groups. During his discussions Dy. Prime Minister reviewed bilateral relations, including cooperation in counter-terrorism and also discussed various regional and international issues of mutual interest. The British leadership demonstrated sensitivity to our concerns on the need for Pakistan to cease infiltration.

4. No agreements or MOUs were signed during the visit.

5. Dy. Prime Minister`s visit served the purpose of continuing the high level bilateral dialogue with these countries and exchanging views on many important issues. The visit has also promoted better understanding and appreciation of the Government of India`s stand on issue of vital national interest. Dy. Prime Minister was also able to project India`s concerns to a wider audience in different parts of these countries.